

VZCZCXRO9458
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3365/01 2941204
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P 201204Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0025
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003365

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2018
TAGS: [KIRF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [PREF](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: GOI ACTS DECISIVELY TO PROTECT DISPLACED
CHRISTIANS IN NINEWA

REF: BAGHDAD 3314

Classified By: By Acting Political Counselor John Fox for reasons 1.4(b)
) and (d).

¶1. (S) Summary: At the October 19 Iraqi National Security Council meeting, Prime Minister Maliki demanded quick action to end the intimidation and fear that had driven thousands of Christians from their homes in Ninewa and said he wanted measures taken to ensure that this would not happen again. He ordered the immediate formation of a committee to investigate claims from Christians in Mosul that some Iraqi Security Forces officers had played a role in the involuntary displacement of Christians. The Ministry of Interior has also sent a committee to Ninewa to work closely with MNF-I to review security force deployments. In addition, the Ministry of Defense has deployed an additional brigade to Ninewa to augment troops already there. Most recent estimates of displaced families range from 1,235 to 1,884. UN, NGOs and the Ministry of Displacement and Migration are effectively delivering humanitarian assistance that is adequately addressing immediate needs. End summary.

Latest IDP Numbers, Location, Assistance Response

¶2. (SBU) According to the Ministry of Displacement and Migration,s (MoDM) most recent figures (October 19), 1,884 Christian families had fled Mosul. The USAID/OFDA-funded U.S. NGO International Medical Corps, which works closely with the MoDM, put this number at 1,235 on October 15. The Christian Director of the GOI,s Non-Muslim Endowments Office reported to Poloff that over 1,500 families had left Mosul. The GOI is providing short-term compensation of 300,000 Iraqi dinars (about \$250.00) to displaced families and KRG Minister of Finance Sarkis Agaghan has independently paid 250,000 Iraqi dinars to IDP families. In addition, the MoDM has pledged to pay one million Iraqi dinars to displaced families who return to Mosul (this is the standard GOI payment for returning IDPs).

¶3. (SBU) UNHCR reported on October 14 that humanitarian response efforts have been coordinated effectively, with the MoDM taking the lead on the national side. UNHCR and NGOs are assessing needs and increasing supplies of food and non-food items by drawing on the resources of the ICRC and IOM. The World Food Program (WFP) is monitoring the situation and will provide assistance if the displacement is prolonged. On October 9, USAID/OFDA partner IMC received a request from MoDM to provide food, non-food and hygiene items to those who had been displaced. OFDA approved the purchase and distribution of the items on the same day; and on October 10 IMC responded with the initial assistance distribution.

¶4. (SBU) Embassy assesses the humanitarian response as strong and adequately addressing immediate needs, and that humanitarian organizations will remain engaged. With such large concentrations of people in small areas, however, it is likely the longer term capacity of local health facilities

will be overtaxed. The ICRC met with the KRG authorities on October 14 to discuss the possibility of supplying extra medical items to local facilities, and will look into the possibility of setting up a mobile clinic to supplement Directorate of Health efforts.

PM Concerned Over Plight of Christians

15. (S) Prime Minister Maliki opened the October 19 meeting of the Iraqi National Security Council by expressing concern about the plight of Christians in Ninewa, stating that he had received several letters that charged that local ISF commanders were at best criminally negligent, and probably complicit, in the violence and forced displacement of Christians that had occurred there. Maliki said that the GOI must launch an investigation immediately and that if his government failed to take action, the Christians would never return to their homes. He was vehement in his demand that precautions be put in place to assure that this could never occur again.

16. (S) In response to Maliki's remarks, Minister of Defense (MoD) Abdul Qadir Muhammed al-Mufraji said that, of the more than 1,000 Christian families that had fled, most had left their homes from fear rather than actual acts of intimidation. He noted this fear was real and said the MoD and MoI were working together to respond. The MoD was deploying an additional IA brigade to the area to augment troops already there; these new troops would complete their movement within 72 hours. He expected that most of the

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displaced Christians would return in the wake of the rapid GOI response that was already underway, and said that some 20 families had reportedly returned in the past 48 hours.

(Comment: We have not heard reports of returns, and see no indications that the Christians who have fled fearing their lives will return to their homes any time soon. We believe most families will want to see tangible signs of lasting security improvements before they will feel secure enough to return. End Comment.)

17. (C) The Prime Minister reacted sharply to the Minister's presentation, pointing to several letters he had received from Christians in Mosul complaining about the situation and naming military officers they accused of being involved in allowing the intimidation of Christians. Abdul Qadir replied that an investigating committee had been formed and was being dispatched. Maliki retorted "so we wait?" The MoD responded that no, the GOI would not wait; new troops were the answer because police were more susceptible to infiltration by insurgents responsible for the threats to Christians. He said that the investigation was already under way, and the entire Second Iraqi division would be scrutinized. The only thing to wait for would be the committee's final report. Minister of the Interior Jawad al-Bulani interjected that the MoI had sent a committee to Ninewa that would work closely with Multi-National Force Iraq (MNF-I) to look at changing the placement of security forces in the province. The MoD added that the field commanders in Ninewa would have to be replaced as well. The PM called for quick action to investigate and deal with any inappropriate behavior by the military.

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GOI Delegation to Assess Security, IDP Situation

18. (C) In an October 18 meeting with Political Minister Counselor, the Prime Minister's Advisor on Christian Affairs, George Bakoos, reiterated Maliki's concern about the campaign of harassment and violence against Christians in Mosul. He said the Prime Minister has stressed that Iraq's Christians comprise an original and essential part of Iraqi

society that he is determined to protect. Bakoos said Maliki fears the political process will be derailed if anti-Christian terrorists gain the upper hand in Mosul.

19. (C) Bakoos related that Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir, Minister of Interior Jawad Bulani, Minister of Migration Abd-Al-Samad Sultan, and Minister of Planning Ali Baban flew to Mosul October 15 to review and strengthen ISF operations in the area, visit IDPs, and assess humanitarian assistance needs. The delegation stayed in Mosul until October 17; MoD Qadir remained there through October 19 to oversee security operations. A committee of high-level intelligence officials was established to determine who is responsible for the terror campaign against the Christians. Bakoos said that four suspects had been detained and had admitted to instigating the attacks, but that nothing would be confirmed until the investigation was complete.

10. (C) Comment: Displaced Christian families, most of whom have sheltered with friends, relatives or Christian institutions in nearby villages, are safe and their immediate humanitarian needs are being met by assistance from the UN, NGOs and GOI. The Prime Minister is clearly seized with the plight of Mosul's Christians, as reflected in the deployment of an additional brigade to Mosul and his order that claims of ISF involvement in intimidation of Christians be investigated. We have heard reports that some in the GOI are planning to use this opportunity to sack or reassign the ISF Commander in Ninewa, LTG Riyadh, a Sunni Arab with whom Coalition Forces work well. Whether GOI security measures result in the speedy return of the displaced families remains to be seen. If the displacement is protracted, there will be a need for shelter and infrastructure improvements in the host villages. Embassy Baghdad, PRT Ninewa, and PRT Erbil continue to track developments.

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